

PASTORAL LETTER OF HIS LORDSHIP THE BISHOP OF KINGSTON.

EDWARD JOHN, BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND THE FAVOR OF THE HOLY SEE, BISHOP OF KINGSTON.

To the Clergy and Laity of Our Diocese, health and Benediction in the Lord.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—

The holy season of Lent is fast approaching, those days of penance and prayer when the Church addresses us in the language of the Prophet Joel,—“Be converted to me, saith the Lord, with all your heart, in fasting, in weeping, in mourning”—Joel 2, 12. Ever alive to our eternal interests, she exhorts us to enter on this penitential time with becoming dispositions, and to apply ourselves to the practice of the mortifications she prescribes to us. In vivid colors she portrays the necessity of penance, reminding us how faithless we have been to the teachings of the Divine Law, the fulfilment of which can alone conduce to our peace of mind here, and our eternal felicity hereafter. She encourages us to the practice of mortification, by the assurance that “God is gracious and merciful, patient and rich in mercy”—Joel 2, 13. To those whose lives are passed in the service of the Lord, whose sole desire is the observance of the Divine precepts, she brings the comfort and consolation that the Holy season of Lent is rich in those graces which will enable them to walk on, with constancy and perseverance, in the path which leads to heaven. To the sinner who has wandered away from piety and virtue, setting before his eyes the darkness of his ingratitude, and the awful punishments which await all those who love iniquity, she exhorts him to abandon sin and injustice, to atone for his past offences, and to appease by sincere sorrow and meet works of penance, the anger of an offended God. For him she pours forth in plaintive language her supplications to the Father of mercy; spare, O Lord, spare thy people.

The hallowed season of Lent is at hand. Remember, Beloved Brethren, that “if you live according to the flesh, you shall die, but if by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live”—Rom. 8, 13. To us all is offered an opportunity of making our peace with offended Heaven, and returning like Prodigal children to the embraces of an outraged but still loving Father.

Impressed with a deep conviction of the heavy responsibility resting on Us, desirous of fulfilling the duties devolving on Us, as your Chief Pastor, urged by the charity of Christ, We call on you “to sanctify the fast” by a sincere conversion, by approaching that Holy Tribunal, where, in the fulness of a penitent heart, avowing your sinfulness, acknowledging your weakness, abandoning your vicious inclinations, you may receive that pardon which healing the wounds of your soul, will strengthen you against the temptations of the world, and enable you to encounter successfully the trials and difficulties of your different walks of life.

The season on which we are entering will be hailed by the sincere Catholic with solemn and joyful feelings. The idea of fast, of penance, of mortification, may be repugnant to the worldling or the voluptuary, whose sole desire is the pampering of a perishable body, or the enjoyment of those pleasures of which he is a willing slave. But to the faithful Catholic the annual recurrence of this great Fast brings high and holy thoughts. It fills his mind with the recollection of that solemn fast which the Scripture tells us the Lord endured for forty days and forty nights—Matt. 4, 2. It reminds him of the ages gone by since the establishment of christianity, in each successive year of which, during nineteen centuries, to every people, in every country where Catholic faith has been preached, this great fast has been proclaimed: co-eval with the

propagation of the Gospel, and, if we believe the Fathers of the Church, of Divine and not human authority, the lenten fast has ever been practised in the Church. True, we have fallen away from primitive fervor; the Church yielding to our luke-warmness, and pitying our great weakness, has departed from or rather relaxed that rigorous observance of Lent so faithfully practised by our Fathers. But if she has done so as regards corporal nourishment, she never has and never will relax in her doctrines: now as in the primitive ages of christianity, she teaches us the absolute necessity of penance and mortification. At all times, but particularly during the Holy Season of Lent, she exhorts her children to curb their passions, to restrain their evil inclinations, to crucify the flesh, to atone for past transgressions—and this, Beloved Brethren, is the chief and principal object of the fast of Lent. Fasting, abstinence from certain viands is undoubtedly of great service, at all times salutary; but the principal aim, the primary object, is fast from sin: to diminish corporal food to restrict ourselves to a certain quantity is, it cannot be denied, a privation; to war against sin, to battle against iniquity, to cleanse and purify the conscience is, according to St. Augustine, the great and perfect fast. By uniting your efforts for the destruction of sin in your souls with the privations enjoined by the Church during Lent, you will gain a victory over the numerous difficulties which your own inordinate self-love throws in the way of salvation, you will draw down on yourselves the infinite mercy of God, and this is “to fight the good fight, to lay hold on eternal life, whereunto we are called”—1 Tim. 6, 12.

Wherefore, Beloved Brethren, with firm resolve to break down those barriers of sin which interpose between you and the service of God, “cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light”—Rom. 13, 12. Walk on courageously in the way of penance and mortification. Recall to your minds that “now is the acceptable time, that this is the day of salvation.” Fulfil with piety and exactitude the observances imposed on you during the Holy Season of Lent. Fast in order that you may restrain and subdue your rebellious passions, that you may shun the evil consequences of sin; “for the wages of sin is death”—Rom. 6, 23, the loss of eternal life. Fast, and to fasting add other works of self-denial and abnegation, that you may draw down on yourselves the purifying dew of Divine grace, which, enabling you to purify your souls in the salutary waters of Sacramental penance, and to strengthen them by a holy communion, will render you worthy of celebrating in the Spirit of the Church, “in joy and gladness” the approaching feast of the resurrection of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And now, Beloved Brethren, we invite your attention to another subject of deep importance to us as Catholics. No one among you is ignorant of the manifold injuries recently inflicted on Our Holy Father Pius IX, or of the great and crying injustices to which evil designing men have subjected him. Imbued with the false liberalism so rampant in our days, seeking only the success of their own ambitious designs, aided and abetted by an anti-catholic and revolutionary press, they have left no means untried to deprive the Holy Father of his temporal dominions, and to sever that union of Prince and Pontiff consecrated by the lapse of ages, and by the universal assent of all good, sincere Catholics. They have to some extent succeeded in their criminal designs; trampling under foot every right, both human and divine; setting at naught the guarantee of treaties, the laws of nations; acknowledging no other law but that of the lawless freebooter, they have wrested by armed violence from the peaceful sway of the Vicar of Christ, a portion of those territories which for ages had been the patrimony of the Church. Need we here recall to your loving hearts the base calumnies, the outrageous insults which the enemies of the Catholic Church have heaped on the Sovereign Pontiff. Need we enumerate the wanton lies which a scurrilous and irreligious press daily publishes against our Holy Father? And why all this rage? Why are all the enemies of religion and society leagued together against the Supreme Pontiff? Because the Holy Father has dared to protect himself and his sacred rights. Because He has loudly protested against spoliation and robbery. Because He has repeatedly declared His fixed determination not to abandon any portion of the Patrimony of the Church entrusted to his charge.

The temporal and spiritual authority have been united in the Papacy for centuries, and that union has been productive of great good, not only to the population under His direct sway, but to the Church at large. It placed the Sovereign Pontiff in a position of independence—it invested Him with external authority, which in the eyes of the world added weight and dignity to His exalted character as Head of the Catholic world, by placing Him, in a temporal point of view, on an

equality with the reigning powers of Christendom. The union of the spiritual and temporal power in the person of the Supreme Pontiff, can be traced back to those far distant ages when the imperial authority was transferred from Rome to the East. Since then no Sovereign save the Vicar of Christ, has reigned in that city. Compared with the line of the Roman Pontiffs, the oldest dynasties of Europe dwindle into insignificance. All has changed since the Roman Pontiff was invested with his temporal authority, ideas, peoples, empires, but Rome and its Pontiff-Prince still live in strength and vigor. True the Papacy has been subjected often since to many rude trials and persecutions; it has had to combat the inroads of Barbarians, the insidious policy of ambitious men, as well as the treachery of perfidious friends, and the attacks of openly declared enemies. The Eternal City has been taken and retaken, it has been occupied and plundered by the haters and scoffers of religion. The Pontiffs have been driven forth into exile, have been subjected to scorn and contumely, but after a time Rome has ever returned to the Papacy. Sacrilegious men, enemies to Catholicity, hope by destroying the union of the temporal with the spiritual, they will ultimately affect the destruction of the Church, and the overthrow of religion. The greatest barrier to the propagation of their revolutionary doctrines they find in the union of these two influences, the temporal and spiritual power. As yet, they have not been able to accomplish their wishes, the Eternal City still recognizes the sway of Pius IX; but his firmness and not the armed legions of Catholic Europe, has arrested the sacrilegious designs of his enemies. The dignified attitude of that venerable man, relying not on human efforts, but on the all-powerful aid of Him who said "I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world"—resigned to every trial and persecution, but resolved never to betray the trust reposed in him of preserving to the Church the temporal possessions which have been handed down through successive Popes as a sacred heritage, has thrown around him a moral force and influence which has confounded his enemies as much as it has elicited the admiration and applause of the Catholic world. Before it the ambitious designs of revolutionary hordes are thwarted, their insidious efforts to wrest from him the remaining portion of the Patrimony of St. Peter paralysed. In the name of what they call "progress," they have demanded the possession of the Eternal City, the centre of Catholic unity, the seat of the Primacy, the city on the mount towards which the faithful turn with glowing faith and loving hearts. Should these turbulent spirits succeed in obtaining possession of Rome, and the Holy Father leave it rather than submit to their usurpation of his rights, we have every reason to hope that their presence there will be but of short duration, that He will ultimately recover his dominions, and return back in triumph to his throne. In the promises of the Lord to His Church we can find strength and consolation. The bark of Peter, with Christ for its guide, will glide safely on its course as it has done for the last nineteen centuries: the winds of revolution may blow ever so wildly, the billows of satanic hate lash ever so strongly, they will not harm or arrest its onward course. The past history of the Church presents numerous evidences of an Almighty watchfulness over her. Without seeking for proof of this in her many trials and conflicts in remote ages, to what persecutions has she not been subjected during the last seventy years—Rome in the possession of her enemies—two successive Popes exiles, one of whom died far away from the Eternal City, the other having, like to His Divine Master, drank deeply of the bitter cup of sorrow, carried back in triumph. The enemies of God and of Catholicity who were the cause of such rude vicissitudes to those Holy Pontiffs, now sleep in their tombs; but the Church and the Papacy still exist. Other trials may come, perhaps severer persecutions have to be endured, the same however, will be the result, the Church will be triumphant, its enemies confounded.

During his pontificate, our Holy Father Pius IX. has had his trials and persecutions; calm, resigned to the will of God, he has borne all with meekness and patience. In the sympathy of millions of faithful Catholics, he has found his greatest earthly consolation—sympathy manifested not only by language expressive of devotion and attachment to Him, but also proven by a generous and universal liberality, which has enabled him to recruit his impoverished resources. On a late occasion, you, dearly beloved, in response to Our invitation, came generously forward with your offerings, and enabled Us on Our recent visit to Rome to tender to the Holy Father something more than mere verbal expressions of sympathy. And for this We hereby offer you Our thanks and gratitude. In again appealing to you in behalf of His Holiness, We need only remind you that his trials and difficulties still continue, that his enemies are still as numerous, as bitter and vigorous against him as ever, that in his endeavours to

maintain himself against the sacrilegious encroachments of his plunderers, as well as to support the dignity of his exalted position, he must rely on the charity of the Catholic world. That charity will not fail him—already, on the other side of the Atlantic, the old and time honored association of St. Peter's Pence has been revived. In every part of Europe, thanks to the generosity and devotedness of the laity, it has been established on a firm and solid basis, and promises in a short time to furnish to the Sovereign Pontiff, if not ample means to meet all his wants, at least sufficient to provide for the most urgent and pressing. There is no true Catholic, who in view of the good which will result to us from a continued and well combined association among ourselves, independent of the aid offered to the Pope, will hesitate for a moment in joining it, as it will not be merely an association, each member furnishing his contribution however small at fixed periods for the maintenance and dignity of the Holy See, but one also in which, united in the bonds of holy fellowship, we will offer up our prayers to the great God for strength and protection to the Holy Father against the wicked designs of the inveterate enemies of the Church and the Papacy.

We then invite you most earnestly, Beloved Brethren, to join this Pious Association which we so ardently desire to see established in every portion of this Diocese, and which should count amongst its members every Catholic, without one single exception. The obligations of the association are but slight, the advantages to be derived are very great and precious. The Holy Father, with a view of encouraging the noble spirit of attachment to his sacred person and the inalienable rights of the Holy See, has been pleased to grant to this pious society of St. Peter numerous privileges and indulgences. The contribution required from the members is so exceedingly small as to come within the means of all, and even the poorest among us can enrol themselves as members of this truly Catholic Association, which has for its object the exaltation of our Holy Mother Church and the freedom and independence of our Sovereign Pontiff. Let then, both young and old have their names inscribed on the Registers of the Association, and let all fulfil with piety and exactitude the duties it prescribes. What a beautiful sight, and how consoling to the heart of our Beloved Pontiff, to see all his children united in this Association. It will be a sure means of bringing down a blessing on you and your families, and obtain for you all an increase of Divine faith and a still more ardent attachment for the Church of Christ.

Wherefore, having previously invoked the Holy Name of God, We have decreed and do hereby decree as follows:

1. The Confraternity of Saint Peter the Apostle, affiliated with the Arch-confraternity in Rome, shall be established in all the Missions of the Diocese.
2. A Register shall be kept in each Mission in which shall be inscribed the names of the members of the confraternity.
3. The collection of the St. Peter's Pence, of one penny per month, will be taken up twice in the year, on the first Sunday in March and September, and the amounts collected sent to Us in order that they may be transmitted to Rome.

This our Pastoral Letter is to be read in all the Churches and Chapels of the Diocese on the first Sunday after its reception.

Given at the Episcopal Palace at Kingston, under our signature, the seal of our arms, and the counter-signature of our Secretary, the eleventh of February, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two.

†E. J., *Bp. of Kingston.*

L. † S.

By His Lordship's command,

J. SAUVE, *Pro-Secret.*